



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I would like to formally invite you to witness firsthand the growth and development that have been occurring in Erie, Pennsylvania. The City of Erie may be home to the nation's poorest zip code, but it is being transformed through local leadership, investment, and targeted public investment.

Like other cities in the Rust Belt, Erie was hit hard by the devastating effects of deindustrialization and the migration of manufacturing jobs overseas. Regionally, there had been little optimism regarding a resurgence of manufacturing or having new businesses established here. These circumstances have dramatically changed in the past few years, however, through the creation of a redevelopment plan, which has helped to encourage outside capital investment into neighborhoods once abandoned. One key organization has been the Erie Downtown Development Corporation which has helped lead the charge by using incentives provided by Opportunity Zones to bring commerce back to Erie's poorest streets.

The next phase of the redevelopment plan is to improve the connection between the City of Erie's downtown to its waterfront. An upgrade to the Bayfront Parkway will benefit both business and citizens alike by creating an economic corridor and capitalizing upon Erie's natural lakeshore beauty. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recently applied for a BUILD grant that would help to ensure that the necessary improvements to the Bayfront Parkway become a reality. Currently, more than \$600 million in private investment is occurring in the neighborhoods and business district adjacent to this project. For this reason, I have submitted a letter of support to your office for your review. Awarding a BUILD grant to the project "Connecting Erie's Waterfront" would bring critical infrastructure upgrades to capitalize on the private investment and enhance Erie's success story.

It would be an honor for me to personally showcase to you the transformation that is currently taking place and what further federal infrastructure investment in the city would accomplish. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule a visit to Erie.

Sincerely,

Mike Kelly  
Member of Congress